La Carta

Diversity through Inclusion

Volume 6 Christmas 1993

¡Feliz Navidad!

As you have gathered from our previous mailing, La Guía is now headed by a steering committee of six representatives. Representatives from the communities of Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and the San Luís Valley will be responsible for supplying participants' names, addresses, and numbers to the information committee so that all those interested can receive the newsletter and other mailings. They will also be responsible for reporting on the concerns, events, and interests of their respective areas. An "800" phone number is being donated for use by Pueblo and San Luís Valley participants to be operational in the near future. La Guía participants in Colorado Springs, Teller, El Paso, and Park Counties will be urged to use the current La Guía Hotline (719) 473-6771.

The current positions, as mentioned in our last mailing, include representatives from the:

- Events Committee;
- Information Committee;
- Finance Committee;
- Colorado Springs Division;
- Pueblo Division; and
- San Luís Valley Division.

At the present, these positions are filled, but each needs staff/support members in helping coordinate their committees/areas.

Due to our rapid and sporadic growth, this "streamlining" of La Guía was essential in smoothing the operation of our organization. At our current rate, La Guía will be the largest Hispano/Latino Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual organization by Spring. So we have to keep getting the word out. As participants of La Guía, you will still be caucus members of both Ground Zero and the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center (Being a member of Ground Zero is strictly your choice). In the case of the La Guía caucus, all participants in La Guía have gull membership in Ground Zero. This means that you are entitled to participate in any or all activities within Ground Zero by simply stating that you are members of La Guía.

La Guía also supports a caucus within the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center. As with Ground Zero, all La Guía Participants will be considered a full-fledged member of the PPGLCC. La Guía supports this caucus by registering our members as money becomes

available. A fund for the caucus in the PPGLCC was set up by Enríque S. of Colorado Springs. What does this mean? La Guía has to pay the membership dues for everyone on our mailing list. Presently, only a few participants are listed, but in the span of three months, the entire La Guía organization will be listed as the La Guía caucus within the PPGLCC.

The benefits of this inclusionary caucus idea are many:

- La Guía fulfills its promise to keep Hispanos and Latinos informed;
- La Guía is represented within GZ and the PPGLCC, but stays autonomous from these groups;
- Hispanos, Latinos, and other people of color are included within the Gay and Lesbian community at-large on their own terms;
- La Guía members receive the GZ newsletter, the PPGLCC's *Community Vision*, and *La Carta* (as always in plain, unmarked envelopes).

Make no mistake, La Guía will still be a separate entity from all other organizations, but is forming associations with other groups to promote understanding and respect for each other. Plus, La Guía is trying this approach in the name of unity while preserving our separate identity. If you would like to receive the name and number of the representatives from your area or would just like to have more information, call the La Guía Hotline (719-473-6771).

Obras Periscópicos

La Guía is collecting literary works from Hispanos/Latinos throughout Southern Colorado to be compiled in the form of a book called *Obras Periscópicos*. The main focus has been with Hispano and Latino Gays and Lesbians, but will include contributions from other people of color as well.

Types of writings being submitted include poems, essays, short stories, and other prose. Illustrations of the book will be done by La Guía artisans. Depending on the wishes of the author, names can be withheld, but before a piece of work can be added to the book, the Staff must know the identity of the author. La Guía hopes, by featuring writers of color, that the Gay and lesbian community as a whole will get more insight about what it is like to be a Lesbian or Gay person of color.

The writings in the book can be signed as "anonymous" if you prefer, but we encourage everyone to mail entries to P.O. Box 1335, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901. Call the Hotline for more information.

People of Color Arts & Crafts Show

La Guía is sponsoring an arts and crafts event at Gentry's Flowers, 21 S. Tejon St. in Colorado Springs, on April 16-17, 1994. Most of the artists and crafters will be Gay and Lesbian people of color, but everyone is encouraged to submit their works. Presently, we envision a wide spectrum of exhibits, including everything from drawings, paintings, and sculpture, to wood, ceramic, woven, and sewing crafts.

Terry Gentry has graciously agreed to have us all over to view, buy, and/or exhibit our wares, so get in touch with us if you would like to participate.

LG Booth

Fairs, festivals, fiestas, and outdoor concerts have passed us by, but we plan to be ready by Spring with a booth that is both easy to set up and break down, as well as easy to store. Storage space has been donated for when we get the booth built. What we need now are more materials, ideas, and you. Please call the Hotline and give us your input. Let's show the community that Hispanos and Latinos can put a booth together that will stand out. The booth will be used whenever possible to sell anything and everything we can.

People of Color Panel in Motion

La Guía has formed a panel to represent La Guía at speaking engagements, seminars, debates, and workshops. The people on the panel consist of Hispanic and Latin Lesbians and Gay men suggested or chosen by other La Guía members to represent them. A supplementary list of African and Asian Lesbians and Gay men are included just in case requests come in for more than an all Hispano group. Requests for Hispano/Latino Lesbian and Gay panel have already been received so watch for announcements of the group representing La Guía in the near future.

One in Ten is Here

The following letter was received by La Guía recently from Donald B. Montoya, President of One in Ten. The organization is a new student organization at the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo. The letter has been reproduced as an introduction to all La Guía participants. La Guía welcomes the existence of the new college group and looks forward to interacting with them in the future.

Dear Friends,

This letter is to inform your organization about a newly formed Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual group called One In Ten. The clubs main focus will be for support and education for those in need of communication with other Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals and their friends and family.

With the support of USC's President Robert Shirley, Provost Dr. Bruce Grube, Associate Provost Dr. Michael Ortiz and the entire administration staff, we hope to take the organization to high standards.

Our members consist of students, faculty and staff not to exclude the surrounding communities. Although officers and voting privileges must be students of USC for allotment purposes, this organization would like to extend an invitation for all community members to become involved. We have offered our group for classroom panels dealing with questions and concerns about our lifestyle.

We would like to keep you informed about what we are doing and what events will be coming up. Please let us know if we are welcome at your meetings, functions and so on. For the purpose of allotment fees from the university, we cannot become politically involved with other organizations and affiliations. However, as concerned

individuals, it is my duty to inform you that we would like to receive your newsletters for the purpose of keeping the student body informed about civil matters.

If I can be of any assistance or if my staff and officers can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact us at your convenience....

Enríque

It was a sunny day, there was snow on the peak and the dry, bitterly cold wind had a bite to it. I had walked to a park just a block from the house with our dogs, Simone and C.J. As the dogs ran aimlessly from shrub to shrub, I noticed how dry and brown the park looked. As I walked, the yellowed grass seemed to cushion my every step. The dead grass felt like a cheap, overpadded carpet.

I kept looking down as I walked, listening to the shrubs and trees rustling in the wind; I heard "No! No puppies!" The male voice seemed restrained with a heavy Spanish accent. I looked up and over the barren lilac shrubs and saw C.J.'s lanky form leaping up playfully on a slightly over-weight older Hispanic man at the gazebo. I quickly ran over and pacified the dogs. "They want to play with everyone," I apologized.

"That's O.K. My kids have always had perros." I couldn't help smiling because he reminded me of many of the Mexican elders I had met before. His stern yet compassionate way of keeping the dogs off his lap made me trust him somehow. He had been sitting on a bench under the gazebo when the dogs noticed him, and it was from the bench as he stroked Simone's head that he asked, "where do you live?" His accent seemed to force the words out.

"A block away," I said, pointing in the direction of the house. I felt embarrassed and angry at myself for not responding in Spanish. "¿Dónde vive usted?" I added. A big smile came to his face when I asked him where he lived in Spanish. His dark brown eyes seemed to twinkle and his posture straightened as he explained in Spanish where he lived, how he got there, why he liked the park, and come to think of it, he seemed to rattle on and on about his family, his home, and his grandchildren.

His Latin hand gestures seemed to dance to the rhythm of his speech. I just smiled and tried to picture him telling stories to his grandchildren, using the same Hispano hand and facial gestures as he spoke. I kept thinking about how lonely he must be; but since I didn't know him, lonely was not the word to describe him.

Taking a break from his barrage of information, he asked, "¿Como te llamas?" "Gaimé" I said. "¿Jaime?" He asked. "No, Gaimé. Es un nombre Catalan" I explained. "¿Catalan?" His face looked puzzled and he still pronounced my name wrong.
"¿Como se llama usted?" He paused and reluctantly answered, "Enríque." For some reason I didn't believe him, but I didn't question him either. I noticed C.J. was getting impatient to continue his walk so I said, "mucho gusto de conocerle, Enríque." I tried to excuse myself but he wanted to talk; he asked me if I was married, where were my parents, how large was my family, and everything from "do you have a girlfriend" to "where do you work." Then, without notice, he said, "you like boys, don't you?" I was so shocked I didn't have time to respond before he

added, "I had a nephew like you. Nobody else knew, not even his mother. But I did. I could tell!" He looked at me under his raised eyebrows, waving his finger at me.
"Yes, I have a boyfriend," I said. I was still dumbfounded but I was afraid to leave. I kept asking myself, "How did he know?" Talk about paranoid. I knew I couldn't leave the gazebo until I found out.

He was obviously happy at "pegging" me and I searched his face for a clue. I noticed his round, clean-shaven face had a somewhat melancholy smile drawn on it. His hands had been drawn together in his lap and he said, "My nephew was just like me. Don't be like me." I realized at that moment that Enríque wasn't lonely; he was gay! I felt sorry for him, for all his pride in his kids and grandkids, and for all the love for his deceased wife. The closet had swallowed him and he had played the game for 65 years. Despite the love for his family, he had always been gay.

I met Enríque at the park several times after that cold day, and he always went on about how proud he was of his grandkids and how soon he'd be living with his oldest son's family. Enríque was always interested in what La Guía was doing and he always told me not to be "like him."

I can't find Enríque anymore, nor do I know where he went, but when I go to the park, I sit at or bench and think what a nice friend of mine he is. Enríque constantly promised to donate money to La Guía, and on the last day I saw him, he gave me enough to start a La Guía caucus in the PPGLCC. I had no idea he would disappear nor did I ever find out whether was his real name; but I do remember one thing: I promised I wouldn't end up like him. Instead, I'll be true to myself and I'll find happiness as a gay man.

Enríque, wherever you are, you've made a difference. I miss you!

– Gaime Esparza

My Christmas

It didn't take much for stores to start dragging out their green foil and wire trees, images of *Pancho Claus*, and various other Christmas related brick brack. I tried my darndest to frown on the early start, but with snow capped mountains and the smell of burning pine...well *@#$* if I haven't caught myself humming Feliciano's *Feliz Navidad.*

I always approach this holiday with a plethora of mixed emotions: It means lots and lots of good stuff...helping grandma make the empanaditas, friends and I freezing our butts of at Las Posadas – dodging the abuelos, decorating biscochitos with the primitos, listening to grandpa's cuentos of Christmases when he was a kid. The big family get-together also means relative "x" (tio/tia so-and-so) is gonna drink too much (most of us have one of these - right?)...someone is going to be a little too "honest," voices raise, doors get slammed...etc., etc....a few things may vary, but we all know the scenario. The same ole Christmas record gets played every year. The scene has repeated itself so many times, not that I'd miss it, but I can't imagine how our family would evolve without it (I think the textbooks have given us the title of "dysfunctional").

Anyway, as I've gotten older and made additional 'families' out of friends, La Navidad has taken on some interesting twists. It's become more Joyous and Diverse: celebrating Kwanza, honoring Hanukkah, sharing experiences and traditions. Hopeful - appreciating the catalysts that have prompted our community to unite, looking forward to achieving bigger and better goals in '94. Incisive - remembering loved ones and recognizing that, in terms of equality and diversity, we have our work cut out for us.

I am proud to consider La Guía a new family, of sorts. It's pretty amazing what a small dedicated group of people can accomplish. **Without** the backing of big money and big names, we've gotten the word out, and helped sponsor some significant events in the community (just wait till you see/hear what we're gearing up for next year...phew)

And now it's time to celebrate! (well, not this exact second...unless you really can't control yourself). On Saturday, December 18th, La Guía will be hosting an informal get-together to enjoy each other's company (so often its rush, rush, rush), and welcome the holidays. Expect to receive your invitation soon, y si no puede ir (and if you're not able to attend), well, we hope to see you next year. *Have you bought your LG mistletoe yet?* Besotes (huge kisses) *guaranteed!*

– Rozx

Minority Coalition

Due to the recent restructuring of the Minority Coalition, La Guía has decided to keep a seat on the coalition, as long as the mission of the coalition addresses our needs and concerns. Maurcedes is the delegate to the coalition and updates on the coalition will be posted in the newsletter.

La Guía "Beso"- toes

La Guía is sponsoring a mistletoe drive through December 22. Buy now while the kissing is good! Contact La Guía today.